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**Define “Action Research”**

According to Eileen Ferrance from Brown University, "action research is undertaken in a

school setting. It is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion as components of the research. Often, action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The process of action research assists educators in assessing needs, documenting the steps of inquiry, analyzing data, and making informed decisions that can lead to desired outcomes." (Themes in Education. Action. Research, 2000, p.6). According to our lecture information, the goal of such research is to help an educator solve a problem/issue and the focus is on helping our students.

**Defining the Problem**

There is no secret that English Language Learners (ELL), especially students with different kinds of learning disabilities have difficulty with fluency and reading comprehension.

My interest in this topic grew and evolved over many years. I have been in many situations where I have observed students of different ages and reading levels having similar problems with comprehension of texts and material. We know that reading comprehension is a crucial skill that must be developed and mastered by students because all major school and State tests are based on understanding of different texts. In their work, the authors claim "fluency is gaining new recognition as an essential element of every reading program, especially for students who struggle in reading. Reading fluency is one of the defining characteristics of good readers, and a lack of fluency is a common characteristic of poor readers. Differences in reading fluency not only distinguish good readers from poor, but a lack of reading fluency is also a reliable predictor of reading comprehension problems" (Hudson, R. F., Lane, H. B., & Pullen, P. C., 2005).

**Is it researchable? Prior Research?** The first question I have to answer is if this topic is researchable? Yes, it is. I have done my Internet research to see if there were any studies in this direction. I found out that many different researches have been already done and related to **improving reading fluency and reading comprehension through the approach of audio-assisted reading.**

For example, two recent studies that relate to this topic are:

1. “Assisted Reading: A Flexible Approach to L2 Reading Fluency Building”

Taguchi, E. t., Melhem, L. l., & Kawaguchi, T. a. (2016). Assisted Reading: A Flexible Approach to L2 Reading Fluency Building. *Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, *16*(1), 106-118.

1. “Effects of Assisted-Repeated Reading on Students of Varying Reading Ability: A Single-Subject Experimental Research Study”

Hapstak, J., & Tracey, D. H. (2007). Effects of Assisted-Repeated Reading on Students of Varying Reading Ability: A Single-Subject Experimental Research Study. *Reading Horizons*, *47*(4), 315-334.

**What is your proposed intervention? (Independent variable)** I want to research a topic about the audio-assisted reading approach and its effects on fluency and reading comprehension for beginner learners of English language. I plan to apply this strategy in the real classroom setting to see how it helps struggling students improve their fluency and reading comprehension.

**Dependent variable** – to measure the effects of my intervention, I will create the series of tests:

* pre-test to measure initial abilities of student to read fluently and comprehend texts;
* mid-test to measure and modify the instruction if necessary;
* post-test to measure students' fluency and reading comprehension after intervention.

**Practitioners/Theorists.** Throughout the first school years, young kids need to develop not only physical and academic abilities, but also concentration, eagerness and desire for self-improvement and learning. To reach these, the teacher should provide a safe, nurturing, and enjoyable environment. The learning environment is an important teaching tool. If it is set up with the knowledge of how children learn and develop, it can positively support teaching. In our days of digital technologies, the access to computers and other digital and audio devices might enhance and make the learning process more interesting and effective. In his theory, Vygotsky stressed the importance of social interaction for cognitive development. Related to this is the idea of a "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)." Some skills, an individual can perform independently. Other skills can be performed if the individual get assistance or modeled the desired skill or behavior. Skills that can be performed with assistance are said to be within an individual's ZPD. The ZPD is the theoretical basis for scaffolding (modeling). The assisted audio-reading is the way a child can be modeled and guided by a teacher to improve his/her reading fluency and comprehension.

**Pros.** I believe that a strategy of the assisted reading together with repetition can improve not only fluency and reading comprehension, but also improve vocabulary and pronunciation. During assisted reading sessions, a student works on a text, using visual as well as audio senses.

One of the studies that supports this strategy is “Assisted reading-a bridge from fluency to

Comprehension” by Rasinski and Young.

Rasinski, T., & Young, C. (2014). Assisted reading-a bridge from fluency to

comprehension. *New England Reading Association Journal*, *50*(1), 1-4.

**Cons**. There are some limitations in this research.It did not take into consideration many other variables that could also affect the results. Some of such variables are: personal characteristics of students, learning and physical disabilities of students, the amount of time students spend at home practicing reading, other interventions that students may get at school and at home, etc. Therefore, it puts both, the external and the internal validities of the experiment, under a question: if we can draw the valid conclusions from the data and generalize them to population.

One of the studies that suggests to conduct more research before making any generalization is “Programming for generalization of oral reading fluency using computer-assisted instruction and changing fluency criteria” by Keyes, Cartledge, Gibson and Robinson-Ervin.

Keyes, S. s., Cartledge, G., Gibson Jr., L., & Robinson-Ervin, P. (2016). Programming for

generalization of oral reading fluency using computer-assisted instruction and changing

fluency criteria. *Education & Treatment Of Children*, *39*(2), 141-172.

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